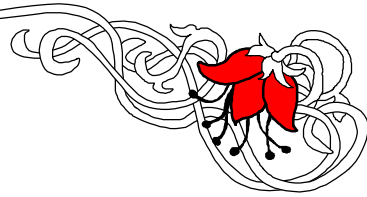


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 6, Issue 12

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER November 2004

From the President's Corner By Dana Klinkhart

Recipes for a special meal are 'popping up' everywhere as the season of Thanksgiving approaches. The "Life" section of the newspaper and numerous magazines are all publishing many of our favorites. Remember those traditional dishes that we grew up loving? You know the ones that grandma taught our parents to prepare and then were handed down to us. Many of those same recipes are published today, some are the same as we remember and others have a slight twist of flavor or method. Gardeners have got to be at the top of the list of owning the best of dishes that come from our traditions. From pickles to pies, our taste buds are lining up for the feast of Thanksgiving. This year, as we celebrate in thanksgiving with family and friends on Thursday, November 25th, let's include an appreciation for community in our list of thanks. The Alaska Master Gardeners Association stands front and center in service and traditionally brings classes on gardening to others. While promoting educational programs, your association provides a valued resource in our community. The AMGA has found its own recipe for maintaining a great organization and as a result, the association is running smoothly. Members 'step up to the plate' to fill in whenever needed and because of that attitude and energy, the Board of Directors is able to schedule programs and tours for you. Thanks for your active participation. Thank you for fulfilling your volunteer obligations. And thanks again for helping when called upon.

Happy Thanksgiving!





Tropical Plants By Jo Anne Banta

What a pleasure it was to have Sue Lincoln back among us at the October 18 regular AMGA meeting! Her presentation on tropical plants was a real eye-opener, especially for those of us who have traveled to Hawaii.

Sue spent three-and-a-half years on Oahu when her husband was transferred to Hickam Air Force Base. She was able to enroll in the Horticulture Program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Honolulu, so her knowledge of tropicals is well grounded.

Did you know, for instance, that Cook's pine and Norfolk pine are not the same tree? that okra comes from the hibiscus family? that the Bird of Paradise will bloom as a houseplant in Alaska? Sue's talk, together with her beautiful slides, brought to life many of Hawaii's plants. Her presentation, in categories from edibles to palm trees, kept us all enthralled.

Sue first "hooked" us with photos of eye-catching tropical trees: pandanus, with its aerial roots; the trumpet tree; the blue marble; and the calabash, whose fruit is dried and used as a rattle. The edibles had our mouths watering. There were beautiful pictures of avocados, bananas and guava trees. One could almost smell the allspice and reach out to pick the papayas.

Her useful plants included the ti plant whose leaves are used as food wrap; the anti-malarial devil tree; the paper mulberry from which tapa cloth is made; and the ukulele wood, *Osteomeles*. The ornamental slides were gorgeous. There were the rounded monkey pod trees; dwarf, yellow and royal Poincianas; and the striking lavender jacaranda.

The list of Hawaiian houseplants is too numerous to recount. Most of us went home with ideas of new things to try in our south-facing windows. There are the standards like the poinsettia, jade plant, croton, and dieffenbachia. Then there are the coffee tree, the maile-scented fern, hoyo, and, of course, the bromeliads. There are Raphis palm trees; dracaenas (money plant), crown of thorns and the succulent Crassulaceae.

I know this Hawaiian visitor will return with a digital camera and an entirely new appreciation of the tropical vegetation. However, lest the readers think all is beauty and sunshine on the Islands, one of the first of Sue's slides showed her in the lab counting thrips and spider mites – strained through gingham fabric in order to facilitate the counting process.



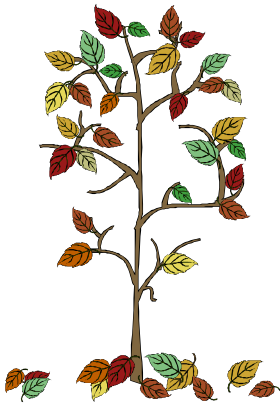
AMGA Meeting Highlights

- ✂ Two board members, Kathy Bromley and Camille Williams, have resigned. Frank Pratt will fill the treasurer's position. Marge Olson and Amelia Walsh were nominated.
- ✂ Linda Klinkhart has order forms for nametags. If you want a nametag, it will cost you \$5. The order goes in after the November meeting and will be returned to you in January. (see ordering information on page 6)
- ✂ Dawn Aumann has aprons for \$18 with "master gardener" written across the front. Please contact her if you would like to purchase one. 248-0582; email: jima@gci.net
- ✂ There will be a room change to the Marine Advisory conference room within the Carlton Trust Building for next month's meeting. Signs will be posted.
- ✂ Annie Nevaldine has copies of her 2005 flower calendar available for \$11, less than store prices.
- ✂ Rebecca Shellikoff has agreed to be our hospitality chair.



Abundant Fall Colors

By Judy Wilmarth



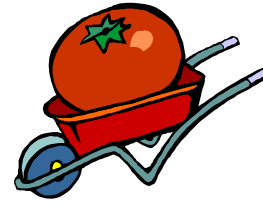
I would like to share with you some free flowing thoughts of the wonderful displays of fall color seen during a walk around our peony haven this past month:

Rugosa roses with bright yellow foliage and very large red hips and red leaf rose covered in small teardrop shaped red hips stood out in their glory. Radiant flowering crab apple with burgundy red leaves and deep red crabapples lived up to its name. Sargent Crab Apple smothered in clusters of deep red crabapples, looked like so many lights on a Christmas tree. A prostrate potentilla continued, despite the cold weather, with its perky yellow flowers; a purple leaf cushion spurge (variety unknown) had so many different shades of pink and red leaves, I found it hard to describe. Erigeron 'Sea Breeze' still displayed some nice lavender blooms to enjoy; several Mountain Ash Trees had colors from glowing yellow, to bright orange, to deep red, adorned with many red berries. A Tamarack (larch) gleamed with vibrant yellow needles; a Geranium sanguineum 'New Hampshire Purple' had deep red foliage - I really need more of these. The Aronia Viking (black chokeberry) had deep red-orange foliage and black fruit hanging in wait for winter snow birds. The Honeyberry was glowing with yellow foliage and the Blueberries shined with coral red foliage; the Cotoneasters never fail to give us a fine show every year, bright yellow in very acidic soil, more multi-red in ordinary garden settings.

A ride around our city will also demonstrate how beautiful fall can be in Anchorage, from the colorful reds on the mountains to the golds and yellow on the lowland trees; add some of our wonderful sunsets and fall colors truly abound.

**Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor,
summer an oil painting,
and autumn a mosaic of them all.**

- Stanley Horowitz



Giant Vegetables from Space

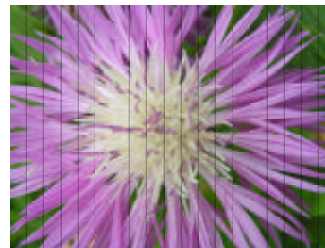
Submitted by Julie Riley

Alaska may lose its claim to fame with giant vegetables. According to recent issue of *Newsweek* magazine, "Chinese scientists have been growing tomatoes the size of softballs, cucumbers as long as baseball bats and other out-size fruits and vegetables using seeds that have been shot into space. The seeds are then exposed to seven types of extraterrestrial conditions, from zero gravity and cosmic radiation to subatomic particles... Chinese scientists don't understand exactly how a trip into space alters the seeds' DNA and yields such effects, but it's not just size that changes... The long-term goal: to feed more people and help endangered species escape extinction." Alaska's most popular giant cabbage variety, O-S Cross, was also originally developed to help feed more people in developing countries.

Two of my Favorite Perennials

by Judy Wilmarth

I have two perennials that I really enjoy but when I show them to visitors, most people have never seen them. The one is a centaurea - a name that makes some of us cringe. Centaurea dealbata becomes well established in two-three seasons, divides easily, and has not in the past 5 years reseeded here--could this one be sterile???



Another plant, Veronica gentianoides (Broadleaf Speedwell) is always a pleasure here. Only one year in 5 has it shown any problem. It seems that if it is allowed to get too dry, powdery mildew can be a

problem; plants in a more moist area were not affected.

Pictures can be found on the web at www.em.ca/garden/per_photos.html (A nice web site from Saskatchewan with photos of over 300 native plants).



Pincushion Flowers: Revival of an Old-Fashioned Favorite

By Blythe Campbell



Photo provided by & copyrighted by Annie Nevaldine

As a member of the Garden Writer's Association of America, I get lots of mail about new lawn and garden products. Sometimes I even get great free stuff – plants from Terra Nova Nursery, a new kind of garden sprayer, and sample packs of seeds. This year I tried a number of varieties from Renee's Garden (www.reneesgarden.com) and found a new favorite cutting flower, *Scabiosa atropurpurea* – or pincushion flower. Renee's "Grandmother's Pincushion" seed mix includes a wide range of colors from deep maroons to lilac to light and bright pinks (the package says they come in

salmon as well but those must be the seeds left in the package for next year!) They have long stems that are fairly straight – Renee's uses a Dutch cultivar which is more upright than many which have curved stems.

Scabiosa make wonderful cutting flowers – from the time they are tight round buds reminiscent of a miniature ball dahlia to their fully opened form, which is a 2- to 3-inch dome seemingly stuck all over with little white pins – must be the stamens. I started 12 plants from seed in mid-April and they have bloomed nonstop since mid-July. I must admit I had forgotten I planted them because I hired my daughter and her friend to plant all of the annual flowers in rows in one of my raised beds the day before I left town for nearly a month. When they appeared it took me awhile to figure out what they were and why they were in the garden – kind of like the six-foot black hollyhock that shot up out of one of my beds this year.

Sources say these flowers are biennials grown as annuals, and there is a perennial form which is advertised for zones 3-8. *Scabiosa columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue' was named the Perennial Plant of the Year in 2000 by the Perennial Plant Association. Seeds for 'Butterfly Blue,' along with a color mix and a "black" and white mix, are available from Burpee (www.burpee.com) and Park Seed (www.parkseed.com) carries a mix along with a strange green ping-pong ball variety aptly named *Scabiosa stellata* Ping Pong. Johnny's (www.johnnyseeds.com) has a nearly black variety they call Black Knight, and a mix, Olympia. Renee's Seeds can be found locally at Alaska Mill & Feed and Bell's Nursery. Ed Hume seeds are also available locally at several retailers – they carry seeds for *Scabiosa* Imperial Mixture.

Of course, the trick with seed mixes is to plant enough to get a good color variety and be careful when thinning seedlings as one color may have a different growth habit (be earlier, later, more spindly or stouter) than another and you could end up eliminating all the "runts" which might be flowers of a particular color. If you like some colors and detest others, you might have to move the offending plants out of your garden once their true colors emerge. *Scabiosa* like full sun and don't like wet feet. We haven't had a frost at my house yet this year, but the Indiana Extension Service lists *scabiosa* as "tender," so they won't give me bouquets into late fall like my snapdragons and sweet peas – stay tuned for the frost report on *Scabiosa*.

I've got half a package of my Renee's seeds left from this season, so don't expect me to show up at the seed exchange with some to share. For those of you who want a great cutting flower with old-fashioned appeal, put *Scabiosa* on your seed order list.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News

By Rosemary Kimball

Grütze,

I am writing from Schwellbrunn, Canton Appenzell (read cheese) Switzerland where things are the same but different...like this Microsoft Word Program (same) and this keyboard (subtlety different)!

I am visiting friends again over here and admiring gardens and flower boxes. Renate, her sister Ursula, and I made a trip to the Alps and it was like walking through the middle of the picture of a 1000-piece puzzle I have of a chalet with blooming window boxes. Wave petunias work wondrously with the ivy-leaved geraniums for cascades of color– and they haven't been hit by frost yet in mid-October. All the plants have been carefully deadheaded so there is continuous full bloom as those plants strive to set some seed and relax from their blooming chores.

Looking at the plants, I would guess that this is a fine Zone 5 with pyrocanthus, blackberries, quince, black elderberry and apples thriving. Interesting too are the weeds I see: pig weed, dandelions, two kinds of plantain, several wild geraniums, much like the filaree found Outside, two kinds of fireweed, lots of nettles (but that's soup, not a weed) and very little chickweed. Autumn crocus is a poisonous pasture weed, but pretty. Orange hawkweed is a garden plant that seems to stay in place, not pasture. There are very active slugs and snails, a double whammy. To make up for that there is a blind salamander with vestigial limbs that eats the thousands of ant eggs here. Under a former bird feeder is a sunflower and that wild buckwheat that's appearing under our feeders.

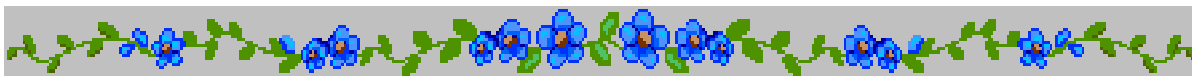
Home gardens are quite small and there are some very nice community gardens. I've only seen potatoes in a home garden once but everyone has leeks, cabbage red and green, lettuce, herbs, and tomatoes. And Swiss chard: BEAUTIFUL Swiss chard. Some gardens have patches of Jerusalem artichokes.

Mountain ash berries are red, currants are ripe, asters, dahlias and Autumn Joy sedum are blooming. Cotoneaster is alive and well and prohibited for sale because it is a vector for apple blight. There's so much of it, that it will never be eradicated as there are low-flying black birds that eat the berries.

There are so many plants that have leaves that look like something I should know: colt's foot, baneberry, thalictrum– but am not quite sure without the flowers or my reference books. All these plants are augmented by the sounds of bells: deeper ones for the cows and lighter, brighter ones for the sheep and goats. When Renate needs milk she leaves a 3 liter pail up the hill at the farmer's barn in the morning and collects it at night. For this she pays him 3 CHF a pail. Who remembers what unpasturized milk– with cream floating on the top– tastes like?

How I am going to miss the German-Swiss breakfasts: Museli, fruit, yogurt, cheese, bread, wurst (brauts must be fried first but wursts can be eaten as is) and jam. Never mind the calories, the Swiss are WALKERS and I have WALKED. Over hill and dale, up hill and dale, around hill and dale..better that than under hill and dale. The whole country is covered with a network of marked trails with yellow signs at crossroads.

That's it for here and now because tomorrow we are going to Olma which is a cross between a county and state fair, and I must get back to my high-wurst diet. And FYI , the abbreviation for Switzerland, CH, stands for Confederations Helvetica.



Bird Chatter

- Nancy Doran reports that a yellow cerinthe has come up in her garden two years in a row after planting it three years ago. It must have reseeded since it was in a slightly different location each time.
- Most recently read book by Judy Wilmarth: LEAVES: Their amazing lives and strange behavior, By James Poling. *Once I began this book, I could hardly walk away - a good entertaining and enlightening read. Suitable age group - 10 years to adult.*
- Volunteers at the Alaska Pioneer Home spent 234 hours planning, planting and maintaining this past summer's entrance gardens. A special thanks to Judy Christianson and Mary Shier for heading up this project again.
- The entrance beds at the Alaska Botanical Garden took 145 hours to plant, maintain and put to bed. Thank you Tracy Johnson, Pat Anderson, Dana Klinkhart and everyone else who helped make it happen!
- A picture in the Anchorage Daily News of the dedication of a police substation included MG Brenda Flora-Bissell. Brenda's husband, Officer Jonathan P. Flora, was killed in the line of duty in 1975 and afterward she started a grass-roots movement that became Dollars for Dog Inc., which helps fund the Anchorage police Department's K-9 unit.
- AMGA was listed twice in the Anchorage Daily News for its volunteer efforts during the United Way Day of Caring (September 16 & 17, 2004).
- Between 1900 and 1915 the federal government established seven agricultural experiment stations in Alaska. Only two remain, one in the Matanuska Valley and the other in the Tanana Valley.
- Martha Galbreath represented Alaska Master Gardeners and the Cooperative Extension Service at the Master Gardener regional conference in Maryland last month. She took along copies of Annie Nevaldine's 2005 Alaska Garden Flowers Calendar for door prizes.
- Master Gardeners receiving volunteer thanks e-mails from the Alaska Botanical Garden include: Marge Olson, Joyce Palmer, Barbara Atcheson, Pat Anderson, Anita Williams, Karen Coady, Christine Bingham, Madge Oswald, Dana Klinkhart, Mel Monsen, Frank Pratt, Verna Pratt, Tracy Johnson, Kathy Zins Margaret Love and Mary Shier.

Youth is like spring, an over praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellow season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.

- Samuel Butler

Alaska Master Gardener Association Pins

(green plastic pin with AMGA logo and name in white)

The Master Gardener group is taking orders for nametags. They are a green plastic pin with the Alaska Master Gardener Association, Anchorage Chapter, logo and name engraved in white. The cost is \$5. If you would like a nametag to wear to meetings, events or out when you are doing volunteer work, complete the following form and return it with a check to Linda Klinkhart by December 1st. We will also be taking orders at November's meeting. The group order will be placed in December and we'll have them ready for you at the January meeting.

Name _____
(Print name that you want on nametag)

Contact info. _____
(phone or e-mail)

\$5 - ____ cash ____ check Date _____
(made out to AMGA)

Return form and money by **December 1st, 2004** to:

Linda Klinkhart
8622 Bell Place
Anchorage, AK 99507
345-2672

New Fairbanks Master Gardeners' logo and badge





**November AMGA Meeting:
"Sharing Gardening with a Nursery"
Speaker: Lorri Abel**

Lorri Abel spent 5 years running the grounds at Providence Hospital, 9 years at UAA, 3 years at the Botanical Gardens and for the last 7 years has been co-owner of "In the Garden" Nursery with Sally Arant.

She will be speaking on her experiences with starting and running your own nursery and how that pertains to her and our own gardens.

**JAMES MATTHEWS
VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT FUND**

Master Gardeners are welcome to apply for grants to increase leadership skills, computer technology abilities and gardening knowledge from the James Matthews Extension Volunteer Leadership Development Fund. Applications for the next granting period must be received by December 1. The application is available at <http://www.uaf.edu/coop-ext/matthews/index.html> or by contacting the CES office, 786-6300.

ALASKAN APPLE FACTS

According to Dr. Pat Holloway, UAF Horticulture Professor, domesticated apples came north with the gold settlers. In 1903, Charles Georgeson, Director of Alaska Agricultural Experiment Stations, planted the first trial orchard in Sitka, and by 1906, had distributed 2,716 trees to homesteaders all over the territory. (Southeast Alaska also has a native crabapple that has been harvested by the indigenous people for hundreds of years.) For more information on Dr. Georgeson see <http://www.uaf.edu/news/featured/04/garden/georgeson.html>.

**2005 Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery
Conference**

The dates for 2005 are January 26 & 27. The conference will be held at Lake Lucille Inn in Wasilla, The cost for a conference and trade show table will be \$90 or \$130/150. Verna Pratt is on the agenda to talk about Wildflowers for Commercial Production.

House with Garden For Sale

Eva Hancock's home and garden are for sale. 3 BR, 2.5 Ba, 2-car garage, 16,125 fenced lot with large shed and RV parking. Garden design by Sally Arant and rock terraces by Yoshushi Kakasaki. Mid-hillside off Birch. 5320 Whispering Spruce Drive. 275K Call 562-7259 if interested.

Gardening Calendar

November 4, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, "Bamboo & Grasses Growing in Alaska", a public education program open to all. George Lyle will speak on tips for growing bamboo and grasses. Pioneer school-house, 3rd & Eagle, 7:30 pm - 9 pm. 566-0539.

November 5 - 6, Friday-Saturday

Alaska Rock and Mineral Show, November 5th from 5 pm to 9 pm and November 6th from 10 am to 6 pm, Sheraton Anchorage Hotel, 2nd floor, 401 East 6th Avenue. There will be vendors, displays, exhibits and a clown on Saturday for the kids. Its free and its fun. Sponsored by the Chugach Gem and Mineral Society and the Alaska Miners Association. For additional information contact sharon@alaskaminers.org

November 15, Monday

AMGA Meeting "

November 16-17, Tuesday-Wednesday

Anchorage Garden Club 44th Annual Holiday Flower Show, 7:30 pm - 9 pm, Wells Fargo Bank, C Street and Northern Lights Blvd, anyone can enter, a schedule listing the categories should be available in September. 566-0539.

December - NO AMGA MEETING



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

Mail: 4006 DeArmoun Road
Anchorage, AK 99516

Phone: 345-4099

Email: amga@gci.net

AMGA Web Site: www.corecom.net/~gardener

(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:

Cooperative Extension Office
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone 786-6300

Fax 786-6312

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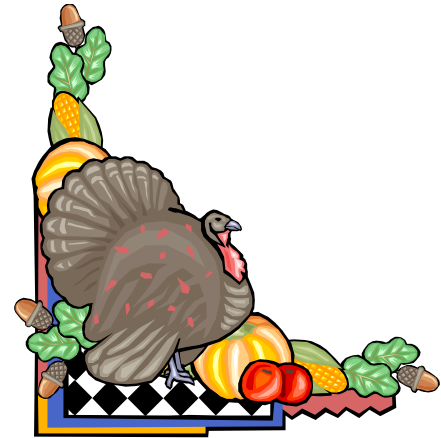
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